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To: History/Social Science Framework Committee 4-25-15

Dear Members of the History/Social Science Framework Committee,

It is with optimism and excitement that I recommend revisions to the History/Social Science Framework in California so that it includes a more balanced and fair representation of the diversity of the state population in the educational curriculum (K-12). Particularly, the state curriculum seriously neglects Chicanas/os [Mexican-origin and other Latinas/os], who are one of the longest residing and largest racial-ethnic groups in California. I have taught in higher education for 15 years (2 years at Mt. San Jacinto College and 13 at Sacramento State), and the overwhelming majority (over 95%) of my students had not learned about Chicanas/os in history, social sciences, or humanities in their K-12 education. I want to explain why constructing a curriculum that reflects this population is important in California Public Education, and I also make recommendations for this curriculum based on my area of expertise in sociology/social sciences—specifically, Chicana/o Sociology and Immigration & Labor Studies.

All educational curriculums should reflect the diversity of human experiences and competencies of Californians for several reasons (Barajas 2011). One, it maximizes the knowledge in the classroom by introducing new perspectives that represents a larger universe of experiences in society. Two, it helps students develop critical thinking skills by understanding their world from multiple perspectives, reducing group thinking that can be ethnocentric and intolerant of human diversity. Three, it better prepares our students to be productive and constructive workers/professionals in increasingly diversified and Latino state. Four, it creates a sense of belonging that enhances graduation and success rates for underrepresented minority students. Latinas/os remain the most underrepresented groups in higher education and have the lowest per-capita income. And lastly, education that reflects all racial-ethnic groups' experiences advances social justice and a democracy that works for everyone.

A state curriculum should help students learn lessons from the past to construct a better future. There are several topics that should be included in the curriculum focusing on the Mexican-origin and Latino population: 1) who they are and 2) their migration/incorporation experiences from a comparative perspective. First, students who learn about the history of Mexican-origin people in the Americas will understand that their history is one of a largely indigenous people that became de-indianized and Mexicanized (see Barajas 2009; 2014). Most educational textbooks, for instance, perpetuate a melting pot or *mestizaje* understanding of Chicanas/os, defining them as a product of any of the other racial categories (i.e., White, Black, and/or Asian). However, within the national categories of Latinos (e.g., Mexican, Guatemalan, Honduras, Salvador, Puerto Rico, etc.) there is diversity (e.g., Indigenous, Europeans, African, and Asian). While recognizing that most Mexican-origin/Latino people are *mestizo*, it is

important to recognize that they are as racially mixed as European Americans and African Americans (Barajas 2012, 2014). Students need to understand the politics behind the social constructs of race, and how in the history of Mexican-origin people they generally went from being regarded as natives to aliens in the United States. This knowledge can help combat the nativism that has produced historical records of deportations of Mexican-origin people during the Great Depression and Great Recession (Ngai 2004; Golash-Boza 2012; Barajas 2012).

Two, the state curriculum should also focus on Mexican migration/incorporation experiences to the United States from a comparative approach (Barajas 2012). Most students associate immigrants with Latinos and Asians. However, overwhelmingly immigrants have come from Europe averaging about 83% of the total foreign population from 1830–1970; and only recently in 1990s were surpassed by Latino and Asian immigrants (2012: 268–69, 278). In this context, state and federal governments acted aggressively against immigration, and produced Proposition 187, Proposition 227, and Operation Gatekeeper in California. After 9/11 and with the Great Recession, deportations reached historical records averaging about 369,292 migrants a year from 2006 to 2014 (Barajas Forthcoming; DHS 2012; ICE 2014). More people have been deported in the past 20 years than in the whole history of US deportations. What explains these trends is important for students to understand.

Over the past thirty years, U.S. political-economic involvement grew in Mexico, Central American and Asia, and correspondingly migration from those nations increased to this country (Barajas 2009, 2012; Fernández-Kelly 1983; Sassen 1996; Gonzalez and Fernandez 2003). Migration from Mexico climbed steeper after NAFTA and continued even after 9/11, in spite of the billions of dollars directed to homeland security. However, the combination of border enforcement and the Great Recession paused migration from Mexico. From 2006 to 2014, the United States deported historical records of immigrants totaling about 3.3 million (DHS 2012; ICE 2013, 2014). Approximately 70 percent of the total deportees were from Mexico, though accounting for only a third of all immigrants (Barajas forthcoming). In 2013, 98 percent of the 438,000 deportees were from Mexico (66%), Guatemala (13%), Honduras (10%), El Salvador (6%), and other American and Caribbean regions (4%) (DHS 2013). In 2014, the Department of Homeland Security deported 414,482 immigrants, and again over 95 percent were from Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador (ICE 2014). Since NAFTA, more people have been deported than all deportations combined since 1892 (DHS 2012: Table 39).

In brief, my recommendation for revisions in the state curriculum are motivated by the concern for fair representation and treatment of one of the oldest and largest residing groups in the United States, who—as indicated by the trends in educational attainment, earning power, and migration experiences—has historically been marginalized. Contextualizing Chicana/o experiences in history and analyzing it with a comprehensive theoretical framework—cognizant of racial, class, and gender systemic biases—will help all students understand lessons from the past that can inform better policies and practices that truly reflect a democratic and just society.

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